

August 1, 2005 – Subject: Spirit

DEAR FRIENDS: Mary Baker Eddy gave her students 26 subjects for weekly Bible Lessons, to be covered twice yearly. Flowing through the year in her order of the subjects, we hereby present fresh views of each one by outstanding Christian Scientists. In this way, we hope to partake with you of new unfoldments of her infinite revelation.

Our selection this week is from – A VERBATIM REPORT OF A TALK ON THE BOOK OF LUKE by John Morgan.

Demonstrating Matter

What are the rights and wrongs of trying to demonstrate matter? The criterion, as always, is our motive. You certainly can “demonstrate” all sorts of things in the human, – money, or body, or home, – simply by outlining what you want and then being positive about it, because the mental is always the dynamic. So it can be done; but at what a cost! If it builds up for you a dependence on matter and the fear that you would be desolated without it, in the long run it is not worth demonstrating. Many students do just that, and mistakenly call it Christian Science, which it decidedly is not; all it is, is utilizing the power of the human mind for its own ends but doing so in the name of the spiritual. The emphatic purpose of Christian Science is to dissolve the mortal concept, not to build it up.

Christian Science proves your supremacy over matter in two ways. First it enables you to do without it, to depend upon Mind meeting all your needs. Then it says that you can now have all that the world offers, because those material things will be to you servants of the idea, and not ends in themselves. The student whose enlarged understanding of substance gives him a flourishing business is not “demonstrating matter;” he now loves the idea of substance more than his bank balance. And it is precisely because of that attitude that his business now flourishes. So “Command this stone that it be made bread” is the temptation to outline the human need and then to work for it, – which sounds very reasonable in many circumstances. But Jesus discerned the subtlety of it, and saw how working on those lines would obscure the light of Mind and paralyze the power

of metaphysics. Ideas alone supply our need; that is why Jesus answered, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.” (S. and H. 336:30-31; 257:12-21; Misc. 307:1,2.)

Vv. 5-8. “Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve” – thou shalt worship the power of Mind only; Mind is to be the only factor; that is the answer to the second temptation – intelligence in matter.

Mental Manipulation

Now I feel that that allurements is the temptation of mental manipulation, – to “take thought” after the manner of psychology. With the insight, which Christian Science gives into the workings of the human mind, it is very difficult not to do that, but once again it is our attitude, which determines the way we go. It is easy to discern where someone’s “thinking” has, in belief, caused their physical trouble, and you find yourself advising some improved mode of thought. But that thing is only effect; and if one tries to manipulate the human mind so as to direct it into a healthy channel without first “worshipping God,” – without first worshipping the fact that man has the Mind of Christ alone, – then it is merely mental manipulation and it is not Christian Science. Don’t we all find ourselves doing that? Aren’t we all tempted to suggest to someone that they should think more charitable thoughts, for example, if they wish to get rid of an irritation? It is true that we all have to express more love and charity, but in practice it can only be done because it is the outcome of the fact that man has the Mind of Christ, and therefore naturally loves, and not through improved human mentality. To suggest to people how they should think should be a very secondary thing, and if you feel you need to tell somebody something like that, let it be backed up by your own conviction that man has the Mind of Christ, and cannot think otherwise than in a Christ like way.

Jesus saw, that manipulating human affairs with a half-scientific wisdom and a human morality is the devil, because it would confer upon man a creative intelligence of his own which has free will for thinking good or evil; hence his reply” “Get thee behind me, Satan. “ Christian metaphysics is concerned solely with the divine Mind and not with the workings of something called a human mind, which is only an etherealized form of matter. Mrs. Eddy says that “Christian

Science...excludes the human mind as a spiritual factor in the healing work” (S. and H. 185:17-21).

Vv. 9-13. The third temptation.

For a season! Jesus went on being tempted until there was no more mortal, concept, but he met the major points of mortality here in these three, the beliefs of life, intelligence and substance in matter.

Confidence in Mind

Now this temptation to cast oneself down from the pinnacle of the temple represents the belief of substance in matter. We see Jesus tempted to “demonstrate” bodily safety on the basis of taking care of one’s matter-substance, and how he refuted that suggestion through his understanding of the forces of Mind. As we gain confidence in the parent Mind, the control and the direction and the governance of Mind, then we shall have less faith in the workings of matter, and less fear of chance or accident.

Here is a wonderful statement of the parent Mind: “Adhesion, cohesion, and attraction are properties of Mind. They belong to divine Principle, and support the equipoise of that thought-force that launched the earth in its orbit and said to the proud wave, “thus far and no farther.” “Spirit is the life, substance, and continuity of all things. We tread on forces. Withdraw them, and creation must collapse. Human knowledge calls them forces of matter; but divine Science declares that they belong wholly to divine Mind, are inherent in this Mind, and so restores them to their rightful home and classification “(S. and H.124:20-31). Those “thought-forces” are the controlling elements of the parent Mind which sustain and maintain everything in its universe regardless of matter. Mind forces don’t know anything about matter, they supersede it; and they hold man within Mind through divine atomic energy.

I think that as we cultivate that more absolute confidence in the substance of idea, we shan’t always be taking precautions against matter-happenings of which we are afraid, nor will we stake a chance on their happening in a beneficial way. You see the element of chance in the wording of the temptation “If thou be the Son of God...”

When the tempter says to him, “In their hands they shall bear thee

up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone,” he is saying something truer than he knew, because that scripture is a wonderful way of showing us the substance of idea. The stone, as we noticed in the first temptation, is the divine infinite calculus or Mind of Christ. If through the pure power of Mind we learn not to misuse that stone either to demonstrate lots of matter or to manipulate human consciousness for material benefits, then it won’t become for us a stumbling block in the way of progress.

“They” – those thought-forces of Mind – “shall bear thee up...” We can only bang our feet against an obstacle in the way of Life, if we are not lifting them up out of the dust, out of matter, but if we have cultured a purer sense of Mind-power we are lifted up above those temptations; we haven’t abused that stone and therefore we don’t trip up on it. So let us watch that we are not constantly looking for matter benefits in Christian Science or we shall always have a stone just in front of us at every step.

Now it might be thought that these three things – to have plenty of supply, to control or guide human thinking, and to be proof against accidents – are normal and desirable in the ordinary way. On the surface, they are harmless; but Luke shows us that it is the “innocent” activities that bedevil us if our attitude is not truly metaphysical, and so we can now see the three as the claim of dependence upon matter, faith in matter, and fear of matter. Jesus, of course, discerned the subtlety of it, and through his absolute reliance on Mind gave us a wonderful lesson in divine metaphysics.

MIND as SPIRIT (Ch. 4:14-32)

In the parent Mind, idea is spiritual.

Now the demonstration of metaphysics is carried a stage further; from seeing man as idea, we are now going to see him as spiritual idea. There is a distinction to be made between mental metaphysics, – which might be simply talk and written words and human opinions, – between that and spiritual metaphysics, wherein the substance of idea is truly spiritual and not merely mental; and this is the point Jesus proves in this section.

V. 14. “in the power of the Spirit” is the keynote, isn’t it?

Vv. 15,16. Nazareth, where he had been brought up, was where he was known humanly, through personal sense.

Vv. 17-21. Jesus is showing that they had hitherto read those wonderful words of Isaiah as mental metaphysics; the Jew in consciousness today is still saying that Messiah and salvation will come. But Jesus takes it up as present divine fact, and tries to get them to see that it isn't in a book but is the living substance of being. He took up that message and made himself the messenger. By identifying himself with the message he was able to prove that what Isaiah foresaw as the coming of the Christ is practical operative Christianity. He showed that idea is so much more than words: it is activity, it is dynamic, it is living; in Mind as Spirit the reality of idea is in the fact that it is spiritual. Now that's something of which no one can convince you from outside, as Jesus found with these people. If it is true, it is something that you just have to ponder deeply for yourself. Do sit down sometimes and ask yourself what it all means to you, and determine whether it is just mental, or has become spiritual metaphysics.

V. 22. They couldn't detach mortal thought from its material conceptions and so the birth wasn't natural and safe; for them it was most unnatural, and their rejection of the naturalness of Spirit caused them to chemicalize violently. I used to think that Jesus was a little unwise in his uncompromising tactics, but I see now that he wasn't interested in having an easy time: his mission was to show that the carnal mind is enmity against God and man, and then to disprove it.

Vv. 23,24. It's not necessarily true in human experience that a prophet cannot be accepted in his own country or in his own home. Christianity divides our false sense of relationship, but unites all true manhood and womanhood. In countless families there is the sweetest relationship where one comes into Science and makes great strides, and because Science is so natural to them and they are wise and not thrusting with it, and they live what they learn, and the rest of the family begin to come along too. Truly, Christ-ianity "binds human society into solemn union" (S. and H. 575:31,32).

S. and H. 324:27-31. "Paul writes, 'If Christ (Truth) be not risen, then is our preaching vain.'" That is, if the idea of the supremacy of Spirit, which is the true conception of being, come not to your thought,

you cannot be benefited by what I say.” That is what Jesus is saying to them; if you are lifted up, if you are willing to accept the advanced idea, that will then liberate human thought from its material conceptions and you can be benefited by what the living Christ says. “The human history needs to be revised, and the material record expunged” (Ret. 22:1,2) .

V. 25. That is the three-and-a-half-period when they got only halfway there; they wouldn't really make it substance. They called themselves the chosen people, yet they were Jews only in name because they wouldn't see the idea as universal. The Gentiles who accepted the demonstrability and substance of spiritual ideas were much more truly “Jews”.

Vv. 26,27. Elias (verse 25) is Elijah, and Eliseus is Elisha: they represent the manhood and the womanhood of the same prophet, Life and Love. “And none of them was cleansed saving Naaman the Syrian,” - that stung them.

V. 28. If we try to graft spirituality upon mere human mentality there is bound to be great disturbance.

The Jew

Here in this tone of Mind as Spirit is an interesting commentary on that state of consciousness we call the Jew. The real, live Jew has a living God, a pure monotheism, and a Christ within; he knows the substance of idea. The dead Jew has a tribal god, a dualistic world and no Christ; his sense of substance is entirely material. When Jesus in this text shows up the Gentiles who profited and the Jews who did not, he is appealing to the real Jew in them. The living Jew evaluates everything through spiritual sense, and embraces all mankind. It is the lie about this fact that makes the false Jew entertain such a material sense of values.

V. 29. In the previous section he had met the temptation that he could be cast down and yet be preserved. Here wisdom showed him that it wasn't right to go and get himself cast down; it was right to walk clean through that situation, because it would prove that the substance of idea is supreme and cannot be apprehended materially.

V. 30. Only Luke has this part of the story. It is just a perfect picture of how one cannot hold idea within the grasp of mentality. If an idea of

God comes to us and we try to grasp that idea mentally, it passes through the midst of us and goes its way; but where an idea of God comes to us and lodges with us, that idea isn't being held in mentality: we are being held in the idea. It is Mind as Spirit. Mental metaphysics cannot hold a spiritual idea, whereas spiritual metaphysics liberates one from the grasp of matter.

S. and H. 314:23,24. "Because of mortals' material and sinful belief, the spiritual Jesus was imperceptible to them." That is to say that material-mindedness only sees you as a material person. Supposing that you are hated for some spiritual stand you have taken, and the belief would appear to come along that you're suffering from the malice of the world: merely to take refuge in being an idea of God might not lift you right out, but if you can see that you are idea in the Mind that is Spirit, that you are spiritual idea which cannot be localized or known materially, then the way is open for you to pass through the mist unseen.

Vv.31,32. He had demonstrated that idea is power because it is idea in the realm of metaphysics and not in a human mind; and it had authority and substance because he had proved it.

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